

Michigan Young Driver Action Plan



Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission

Member Agencies

AAA Michigan
Michigan Department of State Police
Michigan Department of State
Michigan Driver & Traffic Safety Educators Association
Michigan Center for Truck Safety
Michigan Resource Center for Health and Safety
Office of Highway Safety Planning

December 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Action Plan Development.....	3-4
Young Drivers.....	4-5
Young Driver Issues.....	5-7
Trends in Young Driver Crashes.....	8-9
GDL Enforcement Issues.....	9

MICHIGAN STRATEGIES

Research and Analysis.....	10-11
Enforcement.....	12
Education.....	13

Introduction

In 1998, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) approved its Strategic Highway Safety Plan, which was developed by the AASHTO Standing Committee for Highway Traffic Safety with the assistance of the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Transportation Research Board Committee on Transportation Safety Management. The plan includes strategies in 22 key emphasis areas that affect highway safety. The plan's goal is to reduce the annual number of highway deaths by 5,000 to 7,000. Each of the 22 emphasis areas includes strategies and an outline of what is needed to implement each strategy.

NCHRP Project 17-18(3) is developing a series of guides to assist state and local agencies in reducing injuries and fatalities in targeted areas. The guides correspond to the emphasis areas outlined in the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Each guide includes a brief introduction, a general description of the problem, the strategies/countermeasures to address the problem, and a model implementation process. The guide addressing Young Drivers is scheduled to be released in 2006.

<http://safety.transportation.org/guides.aspx>

Action Plan Development

A Strategic Highway Safety Plan should define a system, organization, and process for managing the attributes of the road, the driver, and the vehicle to achieve the highest level of highway safety by integrating the work of disciplines and agencies involved. These disciplines include the planning, design,

construction, operation, and maintenance of the roadway infrastructure (engineering); injury prevention and control (emergency response services), health education; and those disciplines involved in modifying road user behaviors (education and enforcement).

The development of the strategic highway safety plan was commissioned by Michigan's Governors Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) in October 2004. The GTSAC consists of the Governor (or a designee), the Directors (or their designees) of the Departments of Community Health, Education, State, State Police, and Transportation, the Office of Highway Safety Planning, the Office of Services to the Aging, and three local representatives from the county, city, and township level.

Young driver issues were identified both by the GTSAC and AASHTO as areas of emphasis in any strategic highway safety plan.

Young Drivers

In December, 2004 the Young Driver Action Team was charged with the responsibility of addressing the continued over-representation of drivers under the age of 24 in traffic crashes. Strategies to be considered include:

- Provide high-risk driver education programs targeting drivers age 16-24 with injury prevention, occupant protection, DUI, speed and attention messages.
- Develop public information and education campaigns with activities targeting behaviors that endanger young drivers. Employ selective targeting of ages with tailored messages.
- Participate with national legislative advocacy groups.
- Enhance effective existing safety programs such as graduated licensing and drivers education.

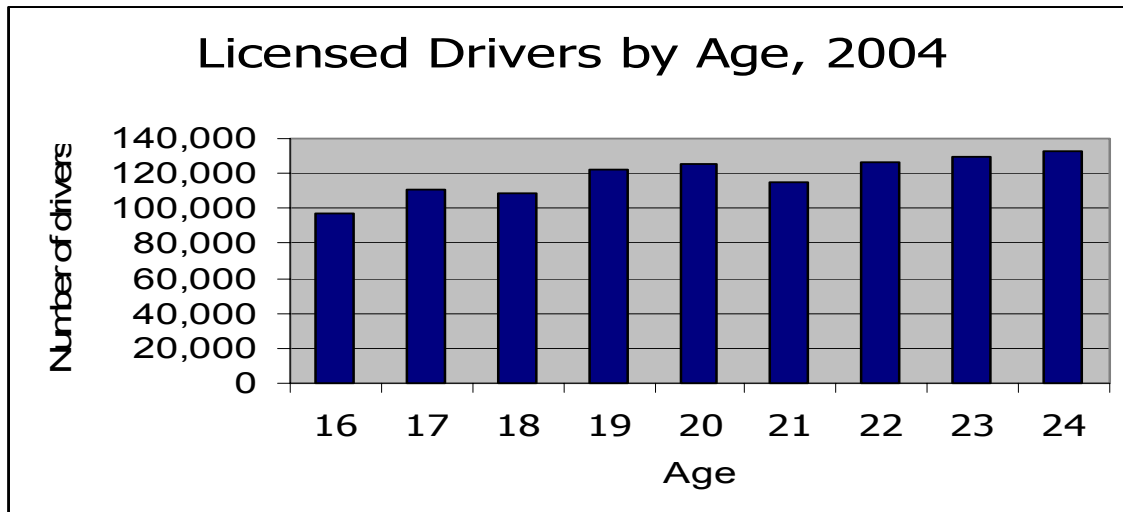
- Increase the monitoring of new and existing high school driver education programs and private driver training school programs.
- Standardize the driver education curriculum required for both the classroom and behind the wheel driver education.
- Upgrade the driver education teacher preparation and continuing education programs.
- Explore possible engineering countermeasures.
- Enforce laws prohibiting underage drinking, serving and purchasing of alcohol.

Many of the issues listed are being addressed by another GTSAC Action Team or the Michigan Department of State Driver Education Advisory Committee. The issues below reflect items that can be addressed without duplication of resources.

Young Driver Issues

Traffic crashes continue to be the leading cause of death and injury for this group. In 2004, drivers 16-24 comprised 14.8% of all drivers and were involved in 193,346 or 23.6% of all crashes and 396 or 22.9% of fatal crashes. Both represent involvements that are significantly higher than expected, considering the number of drivers in this age group and the mileage driven.

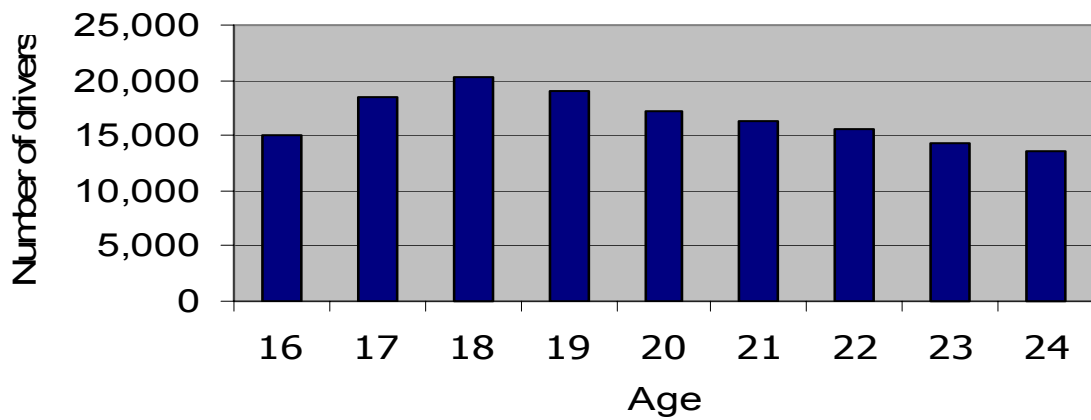
Where hazardous actions were assigned to crash-involved drivers in this age group, the actions mirrored those of drivers in all age groups. The leading hazardous action was Unable to stop in assured clear distance ahead, followed by Failure to yield and then by Speed too fast. All of these involve either a mismanagement of speed, or a lack of or miscommunication between drivers or other highway users.



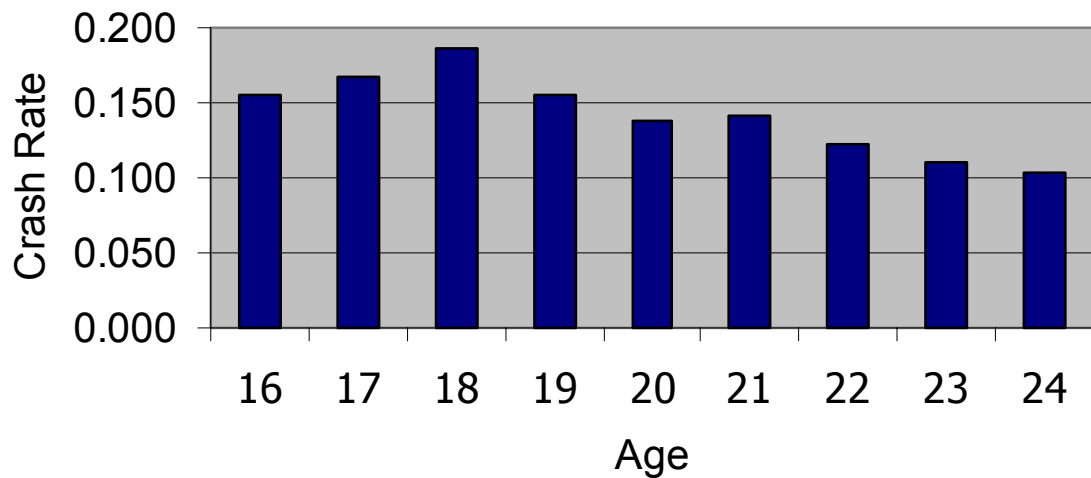
A breakdown of the group of drivers 16-24 indicates a weighting toward those drivers beyond high school years. This is indicative of either fewer persons in the younger age groups, or a willingness on the part of those 16-17 to postpone obtaining a license until age 18 or older. Census data comparing 16-17 year olds from 1990 to 2000 indicated 6% and 8% increases in the number of persons, respectively. If there are ample 16-17 year olds, it may be reasonable to conclude that drivers are more willing to postpone licensing until age 18 or older. This may be problematic, as it allows the new and inexperienced driver to gain licensure without the benefit of driver education or the guided learning of Michigan's Graduated Driver License (GDL) process.

Within the 16-24 age group, the 18 year olds had the most crash involvements and the highest crash rate among these drivers. This may reflect the lack of experience and the need for driver education for all new drivers, regardless of age.

Crash Involved Drivers by Age, 2004



Crash Rates per 100MMVT for Drivers by Age, 2004



Trends in Young Driver Crashes

Graduated Driver Licensing (for drivers under 18) and the testing procedures in place for new drivers over 18 have placed emphasis on late night crashes; as evidenced by the Midnight-5AM restriction for drivers holding a Level 2 license. Though this is true for fatal crashes, it is less so for non-fatal crashes. This is also true for day of week, with Saturday recording the most fatalities, but a nearly even distribution when considering crashes of all types.

DRIVER AGE 16-24 (continued)

TIME OF DAY IN CRASH	All Crashes		Fatal Crashes		Injury Crashes	
	Number of Drivers	% of Total	Number	% of Fatal	Number	% of Injury
12:00 mid. - 02:59 a.m.	8,137	5.4	64	16.2	1,955	5.6
03:00 a.m. - 05:59 a.m.	3,880	2.6	21	5.3	998	2.9
06:00 a.m. - 08:59 a.m.	15,262	10.2	31	7.8	3,309	9.5
09:00 a.m. - 11:59 a.m.	15,766	10.5	39	9.8	3,672	10.5
12:00 noon – 02:59 p.m.	27,041	18.0	54	13.6	6,528	18.7
03:00 p.m. - 05:59 p.m.	39,984	26.6	67	16.9	9,350	26.8
06:00 p.m. - 08:59 p.m.	23,340	15.5	51	12.9	5,315	15.2
09:00 p.m. - 11:59 p.m.	15,640	10.4	66	16.7	3,492	10.0
Unknown	1,170	0.8	3	0.8	234	0.7
Total Drivers	150,220	100.0	396	100.0	34,853	100.0

DRIVER AGE 16-24 (continued)

DAY OF WEEK IN CRASH	All Crashes		Fatal Crashes		Injury Crashes	
	Number of Drivers	% of Total	Number	% of Fatal	Number	% of Injury
Sunday	15,737	10.5	51	12.9	3,819	11.0
Monday	20,798	13.8	52	13.1	4,750	13.6
Tuesday	21,585	14.4	56	14.1	4,876	14.0
Wednesday	22,717	15.1	53	13.4	5,061	14.5
Thursday	22,087	14.7	39	9.8	5,028	14.4
Friday	27,643	18.4	63	15.9	6,450	18.5
Saturday	19,653	13.1	82	20.7	4,869	14.0
Total Drivers	150,220	100.0	396	100.0	34,853	100.0

Problems in the Enforcement of GDL

One of the dilemmas facing law enforcement is the determination of driver license status. It is not difficult to determine the license status of a driver once stopped, but there is some misunderstanding of what GDL *does* allow. Though the additional risk to the Level 2 licensed driver is not evident when all types of crashes are considered; because there are more crashes during the evening “rush hour” but fatal crashes tend to increase dramatically during late night, when traffic volumes are less.

Research and Analysis

Strategy:

Provide for an in-depth analysis of crash causation for drivers in the GDL process, as well as those 18 and over who do not go through this process. Studies, such as those done by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) immediately following the implementation of GDL and for several years thereafter, are a significant tool in evaluating the success or failure of this process. Currently no in-depth evaluations are in progress or planned to address the status of GDL in Michigan.

Action:

Short term: Explore the potential funding sources to continue this valuable research. This ensures that the proper content and delivery of driver education curriculum and the licensing process itself contributes to addressing crash causes among this age group.

Long term: Work with the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) Driver Education Advisory Committee to create, within the GDL law framework, a permanent requirement and funding source for this research and analysis to ensure that we are providing the best opportunity for our youngest and least experienced drivers to succeed.

Strategy:

Continue to work toward reducing crashes involving drivers in this age group.

Action:

Short term: Continue to convene the Young Driver Action Team, in conjunction with the MDOS Driver Education Advisory Committee, under the auspices of the GTSAC or as a stand-alone committee under the MDOS.

Long Term: Under the guidance of the MDOS, create a standing committee of “interested parties” to annually monitor and evaluate the success or failure of our systems of easing novice drivers into the traffic mix and turning them as quickly as possible into experienced drivers.

Enforcement

Strategy:

Enhance the capability and knowledge base for the law enforcement community to better monitor the actions of new drivers.

Action:

Short Term: With the assistance of the MDOS Driver Education Advisory committee; create a ticket book-sized “cheat sheet” that has all pertinent information for the various licensing levels and the documents required for drivers at the various levels of licensing and education.

Long Term: Include the law enforcement community in all changes to GDL, driver education and licensing that make their job easier. This may include public information and education (PI&E) efforts, training opportunities and inclusion on appropriate committees, in order that information and tools can be more effectively disseminated.

Education

Strategy:

Assist the novice driver, regardless of age, in forming the attitudes, behaviors and gaining the knowledge necessary to reduce the incidence of traffic crashes within this group.

Action:

Short Term: Explore the feasibility of and the options available for a driver education program aimed at all new drivers not currently being served by the GDL process.

Long Term: Within the evolution of Michigan driver licensing law, formulate policy, procedure and curriculum recommendations whereby driver education would become a requirement for all drivers applying for licensure for the first time, regardless of age.

As the Young Driver Guide is made available within the NCHRP Project 17-18(3), these issues will be considered in addition to the issues and strategies found in this Action Plan.

GTSAC Young Driver Action Team

Richard Miller, AAA Michigan
Dianne Perukel, OHSP
Jeff Simpson, MDOS
Jerry Ockert, MDE (retired), MDTSEA
Don Smith, MSU (retired)
Chris Caswell, Michigan Center for Truck Safety
Bill Kennedy, MDOS
Dave Van Dyke, Sears Driving School
Robin Bordner, MDTSEA
Ben Cole, MDTSEA
Nikki Klemmer, OHSP
Cindy Agle, Michigan Resource Center for Health & Safety
Karen Fedewa, MDOS
Norene Lind, MDTSEA
Dave Wallace, Prosecuting Attorney Association
Dan Vartanian, OHSP
Gary Bubar, AAA Michigan